







Adopted by the Baltimore County Council March 18, 2002

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Introduction

On February 8, 2001, the Baltimore County Council passed Resolution No. 15-01 (Figure 1), sponsored by Councilman Olszewski, requesting that a Community Conservation Plan be prepared for the Wells-McComas community. This plan is focused on the relationship between the manufacturing businesses and the residents of the community. This community is characterized by mixed land use, particularly that of heavy industrial uses located next to homes. It is this mixture that has caused conflicts in the community for many years.

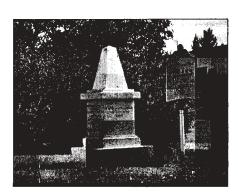
Located on the eastern side of Baltimore County, along the west bank of the Back River, the Wells-McComas community is an isolated haven for many residents. The study area (Figure 2) is bounded on the east by the Back River, to the north by the Back River Waste Treatment Facility, and to the west and to the south by I-695.

The Wells-McComas community has tried to establish a balance between residents and businesses. Residents still consider the neighborhood a good place to live and raise a family. Many are encouraged by new families moving into the neighborhood. Dedicated community and business members want to plan for ways to enhance the quality of life and reputation of the neighborhood not just through problem solving but also through promotion of the community's many assets. During the planning process, most of the issues that were raised focus on the relationship between business owners and homeowners, quality of life for residents, and the waterfront as an asset.

Background

Until early in the century, the land on which the community was built was rural in character. It was the War of 1812 that first brought attention to this area of Baltimore County. As Fort McHenry mounted its successful defense of Baltimore during the War of 1812, a crucial, though much lesser known, land battle was taking place to the east of Baltimore. This battle took place on much of the land that is now the Wells-McComas community. Known as the 'Battle of North Point' (September 12-14, 1814), a series of skirmishes and battles occurred between the British troops and the defending American militia. A significant





Battle Monument, located on Old North Point Road, is the principal reminder that this area was an important battlefield.



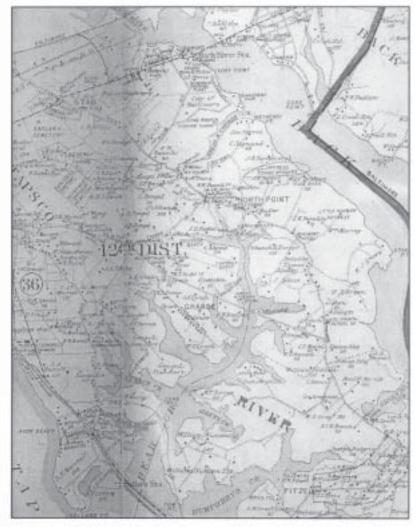


A sample of the many land uses found in the Wells-McComas community.

casualty at the Battle of North Point was British General Ross. Legend has it that two sharpshooters, Daniel Wells and Henry McComas, made Ross their target. Whether they actually fired the shots will never be known. The boys fell almost immediately to British bullets.

Over time the Wells-McComas community has evolved into a area with many different land uses located in close proximity to each other. While mixed-use developments are encouraged, it is certain that some land uses are not compatible. It is this incompatibility that is of concern for many Wells-McComas residents and business owners.

The purpose of the Wells-McComas Community Conservation Plan is to encourage the residents and business owners to join together to



A section of the 1915 Baltimore County Atlas shows early settlement in the Wells-McComas study area. See a larger version of this map in Figure 3.

find a solution that is acceptable. Whether the solution is focused on finding ways for everyone to live peacefully together, or to find new locations for some businesses, it will be a solution agreed upon by both parties. In addition, it is important also to recognize that the strategies, recommendations, and programs set forth in this Community Conservation Plan are designed to meet the social and physical development needs of the Wells-McComas Community over the next five to ten years. The Wells-McComas Community Conservation Plan is designed to be adopted as an amendment to the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010.

PLANNING PROCESS

The Wells-McComas Community Conservation Plan is a working document that addresses the concerns of neighborhood residents and business owners in an attempt to preserve the livability and long-term viability of their community. The foundation of this plan is based on active citizen participation and informed decision making. With the input of residents, this plan is more effective in meeting the particular needs of this community and stands a better chance of being implemented.

This plan provides an analysis of a wide range of factors that collectively shape the Wells-McComas community's physical, social, and economic environment, while affecting its capacity to continue to function as an integral and unique part of Baltimore County's community composition.

The Wells-McComas Advisory Committee members met four times during the months of April and May 2001. The meetings focused on discussing the issues in the community and finding viable alternatives. Guests from various county departments attended some of the Advisory Committee meetings, lending their insight and expertise to the group's discussion.

The community planning process includes five key steps. First, background information about the community was gathered. This information included maps, data gathered on-site in the community, and in dis-

THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS



Gather background information on general area, such as maps, and meet with residents.



Create advisory group and work on identifying community assets, issues & concerns, and vision for possible future actions.



Create a draft plan and present to community for comment.



Plan adoption by the Planning Board and County Council



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

MASTER PLAN 2010 BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND





ADOPTED FEBRUARY 22, 2000

cussions with residents. Most of this information was gathered by the Community Planner for the planning district. Second, the advisory committee was established. The committee's purpose is to identify issues and concerns within the community, identify the community's assets, and to develop the community's vision for the future. Third, the draft plan was created, recommending actions and strategies to address the issues. The draft plan was taken to community-wide meetings for review and comment, as well as submitted to Baltimore County agencies for review and comment. Fourth, after revisions are made, the document was submitted to the Planning Board and County Council for adoption as anamendment to *Master Plan 2010*. Public hearings are part of the adoption process with the Planning Board and County Council. Finally, the adopted plan is used by the community and county agencies for the implementation of recommendations set forth in the plan.

PLAN PURPOSE

Mission Statement

"The mission of the Wells-McComas Advisory Committee is to serve the community through the creation of a Community Plan, to be adopted as an amendment to the Baltimore County *Master Plan 2010*. By working with our neighbors, local government, and businesses we will identify, prioritize, and develop viable solutions for areas of concern.

The following is a list of some of our objectives and goals. We invite citizens of the Wells-McComas community to come and help us in our efforts.

- We desire to instill or re-instill community pride and involvement; and to reunite all aspects of the community, past and present, young and old.
- We recognize that the waterfront is an asset, and we seek to preserve it as such.
- We are concerned that there is no open space in our community, and we desire to create such an area.
- We are concerned with the prosperity of our community, and our youth and are deeply committed to supporting them.

- We desire to create partnerships with educational institutions as a means of supporting our youth.
- We strongly believe that the partnership between the businesses and community is important in the implementation of a community plan and for the future of our community.
- We recognize conflicts between businesses and residents; and we resolve to seek and implement solutions to correct them.
- We recognize that relocation may not be possible for all businesses currently located in our community, so we also resolve to search for alternate solutions to co-exist peacefully.
- We believe that heavy truck traffic holds safety implications for the community, and we wish to seek alternative routes for trucks.
- We resolve to take an active approach to these problems and remain actively engaged in solving them."

Community Assets

The natural resources of the Wells-McComas community have been noted time and time again as one of the greatest assets and contributors to the quality of life in the community. The waterfront is noted for its quiet and peaceful contribution to the lives of the residents. In addition, the waterfront is also used for recreational purposes such as boating and fishing. The community would like to gain greater access to the waterfront in order to increase recreational opportunities. The protection of the quality of the waterfront as a natural resource is also important to the community. Many residents are concerned about the environmental effects of industrial uses along the waterfront in their community. By increasing the access to the waterfront and protecting this natural feature, the community hopes to continue attracting young families to the area.

Issues and Concerns

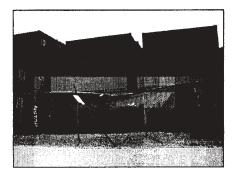
A number of issues which affect the quality of life for the Wells-McComas community were identified during the Advisory Group meetings.

These issues identify specific concerns of the community and lead to discussion about future possibilities. The following is a summary based



The waterfront is one of the community's greatest assets, yet public access is very limited.





Confusing signage in the neighborhood often contributes to truck traffic in prohibited areas. Poorly maintained industrial areas hurt the community's appearance.

on those discussions. A map highlighting these issues can be found in Figure 6.

- Dust from manufacturing/industrial facilities
- Noise from trucks
- · Lack of water access
- · No recreational areas
- No sidewalks or pedestrian-friendly walking areas
- Inefficient signage stopping trucks from traveling through residential areas
- Lack of space for residents or businesses to expand, thus leading to possible relocation of waterfront businesses to new areas

Industrial areas generally carry a higher environmental burden than do purely residential neighborhoods in terms of pollution impacts and risk. These burdens include poor air quality, noise, traffic safety, congestion, and vibration impacts from heavy truck traffic. These industrial areas in the Wells-McComas community are the source of much debate. Some of the business owners along the waterfront would be willing to relocate with financial assistance. If not, then the business owners and residents must find some way to coexist in a peaceful manner.

Improving the quality of life in established communities, such as Wells-McComas, is a primary factor in Maryland's Smart Growth program. It is important for the Wells-McComas community to enhance the features that have made it sustainable in the past, in order to ensure the viability of the community for the future.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Infrastructure

Most older urban areas in Baltimore County are faced with aging infrastructure. Because of heavy truck traffic in the community, the roads have been under constant repair and are presently in an acceptable condition. However, if the trucking and other manufacturing facilities were to remain in the community, the roads would need to be monitored on a continual basis.

Sidewalks and curbs along the roads are desirable. Streetscape plans are needed for the area. The intersection of Bletzer, Bletzer, and Edgewater needs streetscape improvements. Community signage and plantings could provide a gateway treatment at Cove Road.

Transportation

Truck traffic moving through the community is one of the greatest concerns. Noise and dust from the truck traffic has affected the residential areas.

The intersection of Bletzer Road, Bletzer Road, and Edgewater Place needs to be studied by transportation professionals, in order to address design flaws that are causing driver confusion and to define traffic patterns through the intersection.

Stop signs are not obeyed. Signage prohibiting truck traffic beyond a specific point is often not obeyed.

Signage, preventing thru-traffic in residential areas, is important to maintain and monitor. In particular, the intersection of Bletzer Road, Bletzer Road, and Edgewater Place is confusing to drivers, particularly to truck drivers who do not travel through the area often. Plantings within the pinch points would also make this more visually effective.

By placing "pinch points" or "chokers" along the roads entering the residential areas, the change from manufacturing to residential would be visibly noticeable to drivers.

Enforcement of traffic regulations is important.

Housing

The housing stock in the Wells-McComas community is in good condition. Most of the houses in the neighborhood were built around 1960 and are single-family detached dwellings. There are a few older dwellings, as well as new in-fill development.



The intersection of Bletzer Road, Bletzer Road, and Edgewater Place is shown above. The lack of design has resulted in an intersection that is confusing to many drivers.





Beachwood Estates, a suburban development, is a recent addition to the Wells-McComas Community





A "pinch point" shows how the road can be narrowed entering a residential area. The "pinch point" creates a visual change as well as a beautiful addition to the streetscape.

Current demographic information (Figure 5) shows that the area has experienced an increase in households in the past ten years.

Retention of families in the community is important, as well as attracting new families to the area. Maintaining a family-oriented quality of life is crucial to the success of this plan.

BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS

Residents have made significant attempts to improve the appearance of their community. Small areas of plantings can be found at entrances to the residential areas, but more is needed. Landscaping should be designed and added to the gateways of the community, as well as interior gateways to residential areas. The main gateway into the community is found at the intersection of I-695 and Cove Road, and North Point Boulevard and Cove Road. These gateways need landscaping plans as wells as signage, to signify entrance into the community.

The beautification projects in these areas improve the appearance of the community, but most importantly they are notification to the drivers of commercial vehicles that entrance into certain areas of the community is prohibited. By using "pinch points" or "chokers," as mentioned earlier in this report, the visual barrier will also be further enforced by the narrowing of the street. The addition of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings will make the community a friendlier place to walk and bike.



The gateways to the community along Cove Road are clearly unattractive and in need of great improvements. Landscaping and signage are among some of the recommendations of this plan.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

A long-range goal of this plan is to relocate many of the trucking facilities along Bletzer Road and Edgewater Place. Sites in the general area, including Bethlehim Steel properties, hold the most potential for relocation. The owners, of the trucking facilities however, wish to remain in the area, as they have established business partnerships. The Baltimore County Department of Economic Development participated in the Advisory Committee meetings, when relocation was discussed. A representative from the Department also met with the business owners on-site for a quick overview of individual properties and business/operation needs.

The Department of Economic Development will continue working with those business owners wishing to relocate in order to find a desirable new location.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

According to the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks the Wells-McComas study area is currently served by just under 450 acres of creditable parkland. Creditable acreage is the sum of the following parklands: the full acreage of local parks in the area, a portion of all countywide parks, a portion of all regional parks in or near the area, a share of the land area of the three main county-located reservoirs which are credited as countywide facilities, and the acreage of open spaces and undeveloped park and school recreation center sites in the area. The 447 creditable acres of parkland within the Wells-McComas Study area equates to a service level of 21.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 citizens, which is slightly below the Countywide level of 21.7 acres/thousand.

Based on the state-mandated acreage goal of 30 acres per thousand population, this study area has a 8.9 acres per thousand parkland shortage, which equates to a deficit of just under 190 acres (based on year 2000 population projections).

The deficit of parkland in the Wells-McComas Study Area may be offset by the acquisition of either local park and open space sites, or countywide and/or regional park sites that would help serve the area.

The following is a summary of recent Recreation and Parks-related projects in close proximity to the study area:

- Replacement of Edgemere Elementary School Recreation Center
- Purchase of former Edgemere VFW, on which site a senior center and small waterfront park were developed
- Installation of jogging track lighting at Patapsco High School Rec reation Center





The waterfront of the Wells-McComas community is accessed either through private property or by one of the three marinas. No public access is located in the community.

- Site renovations at the former Gray Manor Center, including the addition of a paved parking lot, comfort station, and walkways, as well as the replacement of playground equipment
- Playground replacement at North Point Village Park

One major project of regional significance is the acquisition of a portion of the former North Point Village Shopping Center to be converted into an indoor soccer facility.

The advisory committee suggests that a recreation site be located within the study area. A site along the waterfront would be ideal, as there are no public access points to the water in the community.

LAND USE & ZONING

The following information illustrates the zoning and land use found within the Wells-McComas study area. This information is based on data collected by the Baltimore County Office of Planning.

"Land Use Acreage 2000" refers to the actual use taking place on a parcel or parcels of land.

	Acres	%
Residential	243.07	22.66
Single Family 74.84		
Multi-Family 0.00		
Mobile Home 28.28		
Pipeline Development 39.95		
Trucking	85.47	7.95
Industrial	122.97	11.41
Commercial	9.13	0.85
Agricultural Preservation/Resource		
Conservation	289.12	26.89
Right-of-Way	146.34	13.61
Vacant	121.20	11.27
Further Review Areas	57.80	5.37
TOTAL		

"Zoning Acreage 2000" refers to the zoning classification, placed on a parcel or parcels of land, by Baltimore County. Each zoning classification allows for specified uses on the parcel(s) of land. Definitions for zoning classifications can be found in Figure 8.

		Acres	%
Residential		330.41	30.80
DR 3.5	279.91		
DR 5.5	50.50		
Business		1.97	0.10
BM	1.97		
Industrial		413.87	38.70
MH	408.74		
ML	4.71		
MLR	42.00		
Resource Conserva	tion	324.84	30.40
RC2	221.11		
RC 20	84.34		
RC 5	219.39		

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

STREETSCAPE & BEAUTIFICATION

Recommended Actions	Responsibility for Implementation
Add new "Welcome to Wells-McComas" signs at the major gateways into the community.	State Highways Administration, Wells-McComas Community Association.
Prepare landscape plans for gateways into communities.	State Highways Administration, Wells-McComas Community Association.

RECREATION

ommunity Association, Department of Recreation &
ommunity Association, Balartment of Recreation &

INFRASTRUCTURE

Recommended Actions	Responsibility for Implementation
Entire community could greatly benefit from sidewalks and curbs along the interior streets.	Wells-McComas Community Association, Baltimore County Department of Public Works

TRANSPORTATION

Recommended Actions	Responsibility for Implementation		
Introduce "pinch points" or "chokers" to control traffic speed and deter large trucks from entering residential community.	Wells-McComas Community Association, Baltimore County Department of Public Works		
Law enforcement to more closely monitor truck traffic in community as well as strictly enforce traffic regulations.	Wells-McComas Community Association, Baltimore County Police Department		
The intersection at Bletzer Road, Bletzer Road, and Edgewater Place needs to be evaluated and re-designed.	Wells-McComas Community Association, Baltimore County Department of Public Works		



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FIGURE 1: COUNCIL RESOLUTION

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND Legislative Session 2001, Legislative Day No. 3

Resolution No. 15-01

Mr. John Olszewski, Sr., Councilman

By the County Council, February 5, 2001

A RESOLUTION of the Baltimore County Council requesting the Baltimore County Planning Board to prepare a community plan for the Wells-McComas area of the County.

WHEREAS, the Baltimore County Council adopted the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010 on February 22, 2000; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan advocates the development and use of community plans for the established neighborhoods in the County; and

WHEREAS, the Wells-McComas area of the Seventh Councilmanic District is a logical unit for planning within Baltimore County; and

WHEREAS, the Wells-McComas area has a mix of residential and industrial uses; and WHEREAS; changing land use patterns have affected this area to an extent that a community plan is warranted; and

WHEREAS, an effective community plan for the Wells-McComas area will serve to promote stabilization of the community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Baltimore County Planning Board is requested to conduct an assessment of community needs and issues in the Wells-McComas area, with full opportunity for participation by the area's citizens, businesses, organizations and institutions, and to prepare a community plan for the area for adoption by the Planning Board and the County Council as part of and as an amendment to the Master Plan.



FIGURE 2: STUDY AREA MAP

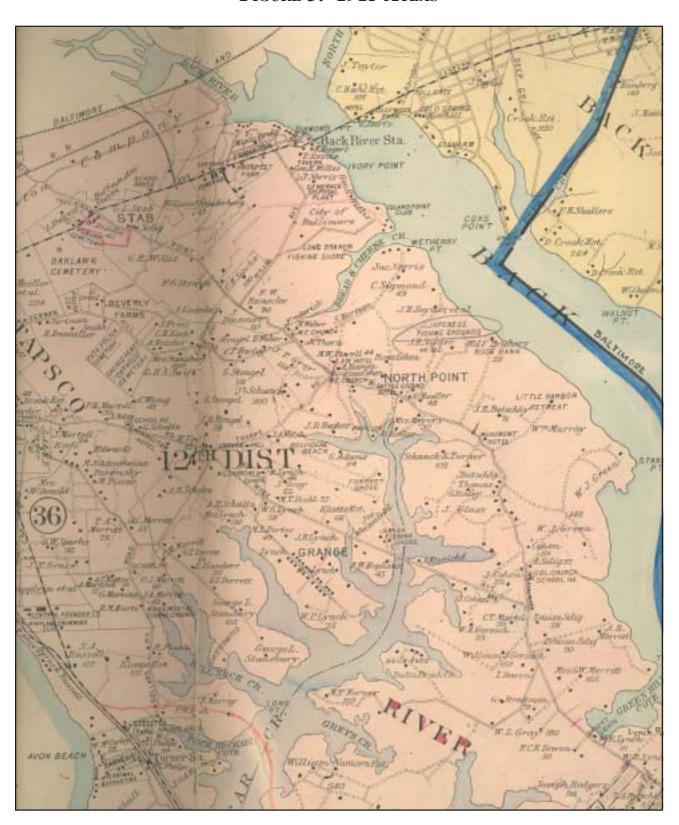


FIGURE 3: 1915 ATLAS

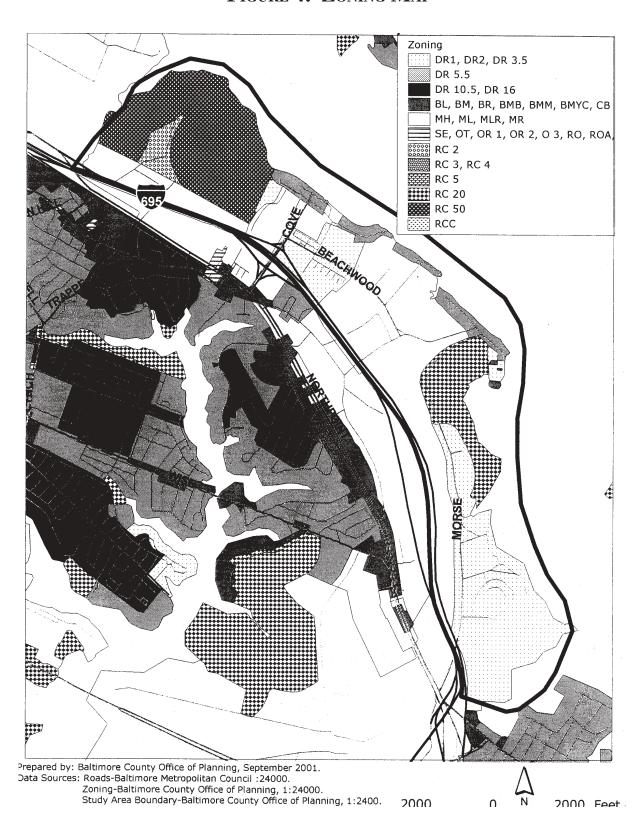


FIGURE 4: ZONING MAP



FIGRUE 5: LAND USE MAP

FIGURE 6: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Change in General Demographic Characteristics 1990-2000 for the Study Area within Census Tract 452400

Currently for Census 2000 data, the smallest geographic entity available is the census tract. The study area in southeastern Baltimore County is part of census tract 452400, which includes three groups. Two of these block groups fall within the study area and is primarily Sparrows Point Country Club.

Change in race between the 1990 and 2000 Census cannot be measured because different terminology was used for the race categories. In 1990, individuals could only report one race, while in 2000, individuals could report up to six races. The names of the categories are also different. Below are the counts and categories for the 1990 and 2000 Census.

RACE			
1990		2000	
White Black American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut Asian or Pacific Islander Other race	2,123 162 7 8 2	One race: White alone Black or African American alone American Indian and Alaska Native alone Asian alone Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone Some other race alone Two or more races: White, Black or African American White, American Indian or Alaska Native White, Asian White, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander White, some other race Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race Three or more races: White, Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native	2,792 2,624 142 8 15 1 2 14 2 9 1 1 0 1
TOTAL	2,302	TOTAL	2,807

Categories for Population and Housing can be compared between 1990 and 2000. The chart below shows some of the changes.

SUBJECT	1990	2000	CHANGE	PERCENT CHANGE
Total population	2,302	2,807	505	21.9%
SEX AND AGE				
Male	1,150	1,356	206	17.9%
Female	1,152	1,451	299	25.9%
Under 5 years	145	162	17	11.7%
5 to 9 years	112	175	63	56.3%
10 to 14 years	95	207	112	117.9%
15 to 19 years	118	162	44	37.3%
20 to 24 years	172	86	-86	-50.0%
25 to 29 years	184	134	-50 -50	-27.2%
30 to 34 years	202	184	-30 -18	-8.9%
35 to 39 years	165	254	89	53.9%
40 to 44 years	148	272	124	83.8%
45 to 49 years	133	200	67	50.4%
50 to 54 years	172	187	15	8.7%
55 to 59 years	165	170	5	3.0%
60 to 64 years	155	162	7	4.5%
65 to 69 years	141	169	28	19.9%
70 to 74 years	85	113	28	32.9%
75 to 79 years	68	95	26 27	39.7%
80 to 84 years	27	43	16	59.7 % 59.3%
85 years and over	15	32	17	113.3%
os years and over	15	32	17	113.576
18 years and over	1,889	2,162	273	14.5%
male	933	1,024	91	9.8%
female	956	1,138	182	19.0%
21 years and over	1,804	2,079	275	15.2%
62 years and over	430	554	124	28.8%
65 years and over	336	452	116	34.5%
male	158	211	53	33.5%
female	178	241	63	35.4%
Median Age (years)	38.7	40.6	1.9	4.9%

SUBJECT	1990	2000	CHANGE	PERCEN CHANG
RELATIONSHIP				
Total population	2,302	2,807	505	21.9%
in households	2,302	2,807	505	21.9%
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE				
Total Households	894	1,091	197	22.0%
Family households	693	783	90	13.0%
with own children under 18yrs	262	316	54	20.6%
Married-couple family	568	598	30	5.3%
with own children under 18yrs	219	239	20	9.1%
Male householder, no wife present	35	68	33	94.3%
with own children under 18yrs	11	27	16	145.5%
Female householder, no husband present	90	117	27	30.0%
with own children under 18yrs	32	50	18	56.3%
Nonfamily households	40	56	16	40.0%
householder living alone	161	252	91	56.5%
householder 65 years and over	65	123	58	89.2%
Households w/individuals under 18 years	270	372	102	37.8%
Households w/individuals 65 years and over	248	356	108	43.5%
Average household size	2.57	2.57	0	0.0%
Average family size	2.90	2.99	0	3.1%
HOUSING OCCUPANCY				
Total Housing Units	931	1,149	218	23.4%
Occupied housing units	894	1,091	197	22.0%
Vacant housing units	37	58	21	56.8%
for seasonal, recreational, or				22.270
occasional use	6	6	0	0.0%
HOUSING TENURE				
Occupied housing units	894	1,091	197	22.0%
Owner-occupied housing units	776	954	178	22.9%
Renter-occupied housing units	118	137	19	16.1%
Trainer occupiou frodoling drinto	110	107	10	10.170

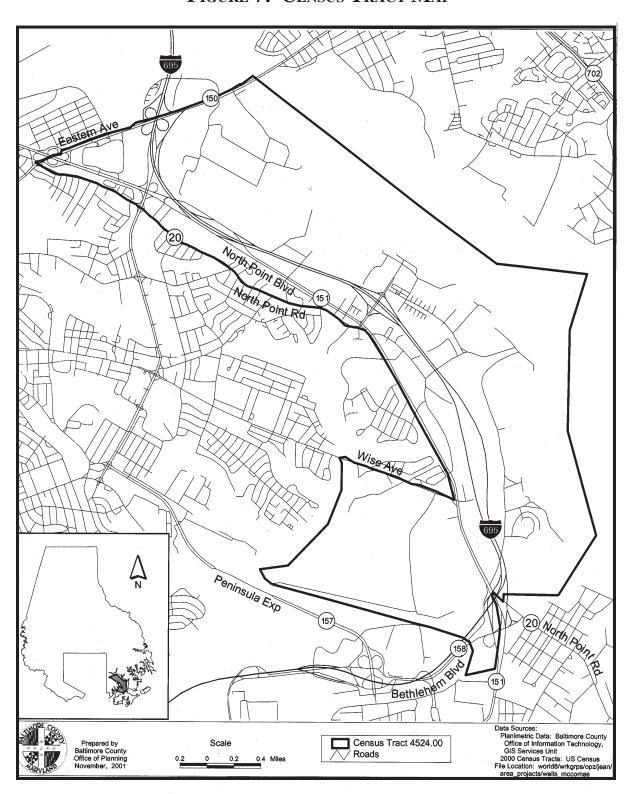


FIGURE 7: CENSUS TRACT MAP

FIGURE 8: ZONING CLASSIFICATIONS

From A Citizen's Guide to Zoning in Baltimore County, April 1999.

Residential Zones

Intended to foster a greater variety of housing types meeting the needs of different housing market requirements; to allow more preservation of natural features and induce the reservation of better open space; to provide greater certainty about dwelling types and densities within existing communities with the goal of conserving and maintaining these areas.

DR 3.5: 3.5 units per acre DR 5.5: 5.5 units per acre

Business Zones

BM Business Major

Wide range of commercial uses. Non-commercial uses of a civic, social, recreational, or educational nature. Uses allowed in any adjoining residential zone.

Manufacturing Zones

MH Manufacturing, Heavy

Banks, warehouses, laboratory, manufacturing and assembling of merchandise from previously prepared materials, office/medical clinics, printing, research institute, and transit facilities, animal boarding, commercial beach, community buildings and pools, outdoor recreation clubs, veterinarian's offices and with conditions any other manufacturing use. Dwellings are prohibited.

ML Manufacturing, Light

Industrial uses requiring assembly, production, processing, packaging, or treatment of various elements, boat yards, laboratories, office/medical clinics, bus terminals, excavations not using explosives, equipment/material storage yards, heliports, volunteer fire company facilities.

MLR Manufacturing, Light, Restricted

Banks, warehouses, laboratories, manufacturing and assembling of merchandise from previously prepared materials, office/medical clinics, printing, research institute, and transit facilities, car wash and fuel service stations in planned industrial parks with IM district.

Resource Conservation Zones

To foster conditions favorable to a continued agricultural use of the productive agricultural areas of Baltimore County by preventing incompatible forms and degrees of urban uses.

RC 2 Agriculture

Farm, farmette, single-family detached dwelling, public school, farmer's roadside stand, tenant house.

RC 5 Rural Residential

Single family dwelling, church, farm, farmette, school.

RC 20 Critical Area

Single family dwelling, school, fish and wildlife preserve, agriculture, aqua-culture.

Advisory Committee Members

Vince Carlin

Ross Cole

Guido Guarnaccia

Tim Koch

Pat Krug

Doris & Al Kuhar

Neil Lanzi

Jim Murry

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